

Message Text

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LIMDIS-DOD HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR SECDEF

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. CAUTIOUS CONTACTS FROM CAMBODIA

SINGAPORE'S FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM TOLD AMBASSADOR
HOLDRIDGE MARCH 23 THAT THE PURPOSE OF CAMBODIAN DEPUTY
PREMIER IENG SARY'S VISIT TO SINGAPORE HAD APPARENTLY BEEN
TO EMPHASIZE CAMBODIA'S INDEPENDENCE AND NON-ALIGNMENT.
HE SAID IENG SARY HAD STRESSED CAMBODIA'S DESIRE TO BE
REGARDED AS A SEPARATE ENTITY, RATHER THAN LUMPED TOGETHER
WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN INDOCHINA. ACCORDING TO RAJARATNAM,
IENG SARY:

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--INDICATED THAT CAMBODIA IS WILLING TO DISCUSS NORMAL-
IZATION OF RELATIONS WITH THE US, BUT NOT IN THE CON-
TEXT OF THE MIA ISSUE OR THE US APPROACH TO VIETNAM
AND LAOS;

--CLAIMED PNOMH PENH WAS RESISTING SOVIET AID BECAUSE
OF THE STRINGS THAT MIGHT BE ATTACHED;

--SEEMED LESS A DEDICATED MARXIST THAN A BURMESE-STYLE
RADICAL AGRARIAN SOCIALIST; AND

--HAD AGREED TO ESTABLISH TRADE, BUT NOT DIPLOMATIC,
RELATIONS WITH SINGAPORE. (SECRET) SINGAPORE 1224
(LIMDIS), 3/24.)

2. CHINA: MAJOR CROP FAILURE

CONSULATE GENERAL HONG KONG REPORTS THAT CHINA'S CURRENT
DROUGHT IS NOW BEING OFFICIALLY DESCRIBED AS THE WORST IN
THE HISTORY OF THE PRC. CHINA'S STATE COUNCIL CONVENED AN
EMERGENCY MEETING MARCH 19 TO MOBILIZE THE CIVILIAN POPULA-
TION IN AN ANTI-DROUGHT CAMPAIGN, AND ON MARCH 22 ORDERED
THE ARMY INTO URGENT ANTI-DROUGHT WORK. WHILE THE EFFECT
OF THE DROUGHT WILL NOT BE FELT UNTIL THE SPRING HARVEST
BEGINS IN LATE APRIL, ITS POTENTIAL IMPACT IS UNDERSCORED
BY REPORTS THAT SOME AREAS ARE ALREADY FACING SERIOUS FOOD
SHORTAGES AS A RESULT OF LAST YEAR'S POOR HARVEST.

COMING ON THE HEELS OF THAT SHORTFALL, THE PROSPECT OF A
FAILURE IN THE 1977 HARVEST CONFRONTS THE PRC WITH THE
UNPLEASANT ALTERNATIVES OF:

--CUTTING BACK FURTHER ON FOOD RATIONS;

--DRAWING DOWN ITS STRATEGIC RESERVES; OR

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--SHARPLY INCREASING GRAIN IMPORTS. (SECRET) HONG
KONG 3292 (NORFON WINTEL) 3/24.)

3. A SOCIALIST FRANCE IN A CAPITALIST EC?

EMBASSY PARIS CALLS ATTENTION TO AN INTERVIEW WITH FRANCOIS
MITTERRAND IN THE MARCH 19 LE MONDE, IN WHICH THE FRENCH
SOCIALIST LEADER APPEARS TO WARN THAT A FRANCE LED BY HIS
LEFTIST COALITION WOULD FACE SERIOUS CLASHES WITH THE COM-
MON MARKET. MITTERRAND SAID THAT IF FRANCE'S EC PARTNERS
TRIED TO OBLIGE IT TO MAINTAIN A LIBERAL CAPITALIST ECON-
OMY, "IT WILL NOT BE THE FRENCH LEFT WHICH WILL CRACK, BUT
THE COMMON MARKET."

EMBASSY COMMENT: WHILE UNDOUBTEDLY MEANT FOR DOMESTIC CON-
SUMPTION, MITTERRAND'S STATEMENTS ARE NEVERTHELESS SOME OF
THE BLUNTEST LANGUAGE WE HAVE HEARD ABOUT HOW A FRANCE LED
BY THE LEFT WOULD FIT INTO A EUROPE VEERING INCREASINGLY
TO THE RIGHT. MITTERRAND AND THE TOP SOCIALIST LEADERS

SAY THEY ARE FIRM EUROPEANISTS, BUT THE PARTY'S LEFT WING HAS BEEN WARNING THAT THE EC HAS THE POTENTIAL TO STIFLE THE ECONOMIC PROVISIONS OF THE COMMON PROGRAM. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) PARIS 8424, 3/22.)

4. SWAZIS END PARLIAMENTARY "WHITE MAN'S EXPERIMENT"

EMBASSY MBABANE REPORTS THAT THE KING OF SWAZILAND, REFLECTING A TRADITIONALIST DISLIKE OF WHAT HE CALLED "THE WHITE MAN'S EXPERIMENT," ANNOUNCED MARCH 22 THAT HIS COUNTRY WOULD END ITS BRITISH-IMPOSED SYSTEM OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS AND RETURN TO NOMINATIONS BASED ON TRIBAL CONSULTATIONS. KING SOBHUZA SAID MEMBERS OF THE CABINET AND PARLIAMENT WOULD BE REPLACED, AND URGED HIS PEOPLE TO NOMINATE UNEDUCATED RURAL AS WELL AS WESTERN-EDUCATED REPRESENTATIVES TO THE NEW LEGISLATURE.

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EMBASSY COMMENT: THE KING'S MOVE WILL REINFORCE THE CONSERVATIVE BENT OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE TRADITIONAL "TINK-HUNDLA" SYSTEM HE IS RESTORING, WHICH OBLIGES EVERYONE TO RETURN TO HIS RURAL FAMILY HOMESTEAD TO CONSULT WITH TRIBAL CHIEF, WILL BREAK UP THE YOUNG URBAN VOTING BLOCS THAT COMPRISE THE PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION. IT ALSO DISENFRANCHISES MOST WHITE SWAZIS AND BLACK NON-SWAZIS RESIDING HERE, WHO HAVE NO SUCH TRIBAL TIES. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) MBABANE 719, 3/24.)
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